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WSAG

7 JAN 75

7 January 1975

DCI BRIEFING FOR  
7 JANUARY WSAG MEETING

THE SITUATION IN INDOCHINA

I. There has been intense fighting in South Vietnam for some weeks, and, more recently, an upsurge in Cambodia. We look for increased combat in both countries as the dry season progresses.

Vietnam

II. In South Vietnam, the Communists began their winter-spring campaign in early December with widespread attacks in the southern half of the country.

A. In the past month, North Vietnamese troops have overrun numerous delta outposts, and captured six district towns.

1. Territorial losses have been particularly heavy in Phuoc Long Province, where Communist forces have seized all four district towns and captured the provincial capital yesterday after heavy fighting.
2. Most Communist gains, however, have been in remote, sparsely populated areas defended by South Vietnamese local forces.

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Number of Troops Entering the Pipeline Destined for South Vietnam,  
Southern Laos, and Cambodia Since January 1, 1973<sup>1</sup>

	COSVN	B-3 Front	MR 5	MR Tri- Thien	Southern Laos/ MR 559	Total
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,000</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>29,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>33,500</b>	<b>163,500</b>
1973						
Jan-Mar	12,000	5,500	4,000	5,000	1,000	27,500
Apr-Jun	1,000	....	....	7,000	1,500	9,500
Jul-Sep	....	....	5,000	2,000	4,500	11,500
Oct-Dec	4,500	2,000	....	....	20,000	26,500
1974						
Jan-Mar	28,500	7,000	6,000	....	....	41,500
Apr-Jun	6,500	1,000	9,000	3,000	....	19,500
Jul-Sep	....	....	5,000	5,500	5,500	16,000
Oct	....	....	....	500	....	500
Nov	4,000	....	....	2,000	....	6,000
Dec 1-18	500	3,500	....	....	1,000	5,000

1. Excluding special-purpose personnel. The totals are rounded to the nearest 500.

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NORTH VIETNAMESE ARMY

COMBAT PERSONNEL - In SVN	187,000	
In NVN	170,000	(357,000 total)
NVN STRATEGIC RESERVE		(70,000)

ARMOR - In SVN	600
In NVN	300
	<u>900</u>

ARTILLERY - In SVN	320
In NVN	400
	<u>720</u>

RVNAF

COMBAT PERSONNEL	370,000
ARMOR	600 Tanks
ARTILLERY	1,400

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B. Saigon has held back its regular forces, to keep them fresh for expected new attacks against vital communication lines and populated areas closer to the capital.

1. In several battles in the delta, government regulars have taken on Communist main force units. The government troops have not yet pushed the Communists back, but they have inflicted heavy casualties.

C. The Communists are continuing to build up their manpower and supply position in the South. They are more powerful and in better shape logistically than at any time in the war.

1. Since early November, Hanoi has sent some 12,000 troops to South Vietnam, in infiltration groups. This is a moderate number, but about twice as many as in the last quarter of 1973. Nearly half of them are for the southern part of the country, and some have already arrived.

2. The seasonal resupply effort also has begun. Shipments include new field guns and unusually large quantities of artillery munitions.

D. The Saigon government, on the other hand, is

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# Communist and South Vietnamese Regular Combat Forces in South Vietnam

## South Vietnam

### Regular Combat Forces

		MR 1	
VC/NVA <sup>1</sup>	RVNAF <sup>2</sup>	VC/NVA	RVNAF
187,000	372,000	84,000	103,000
		325th	VNMC
		324B	Airborne
		304th	1st
		2d	2d
		673d AD	3d
		377th AD	Regional Forces

1. Includes VC/NVA personnel in ground combat, combat support, and air defense units and local force companies and platoons.

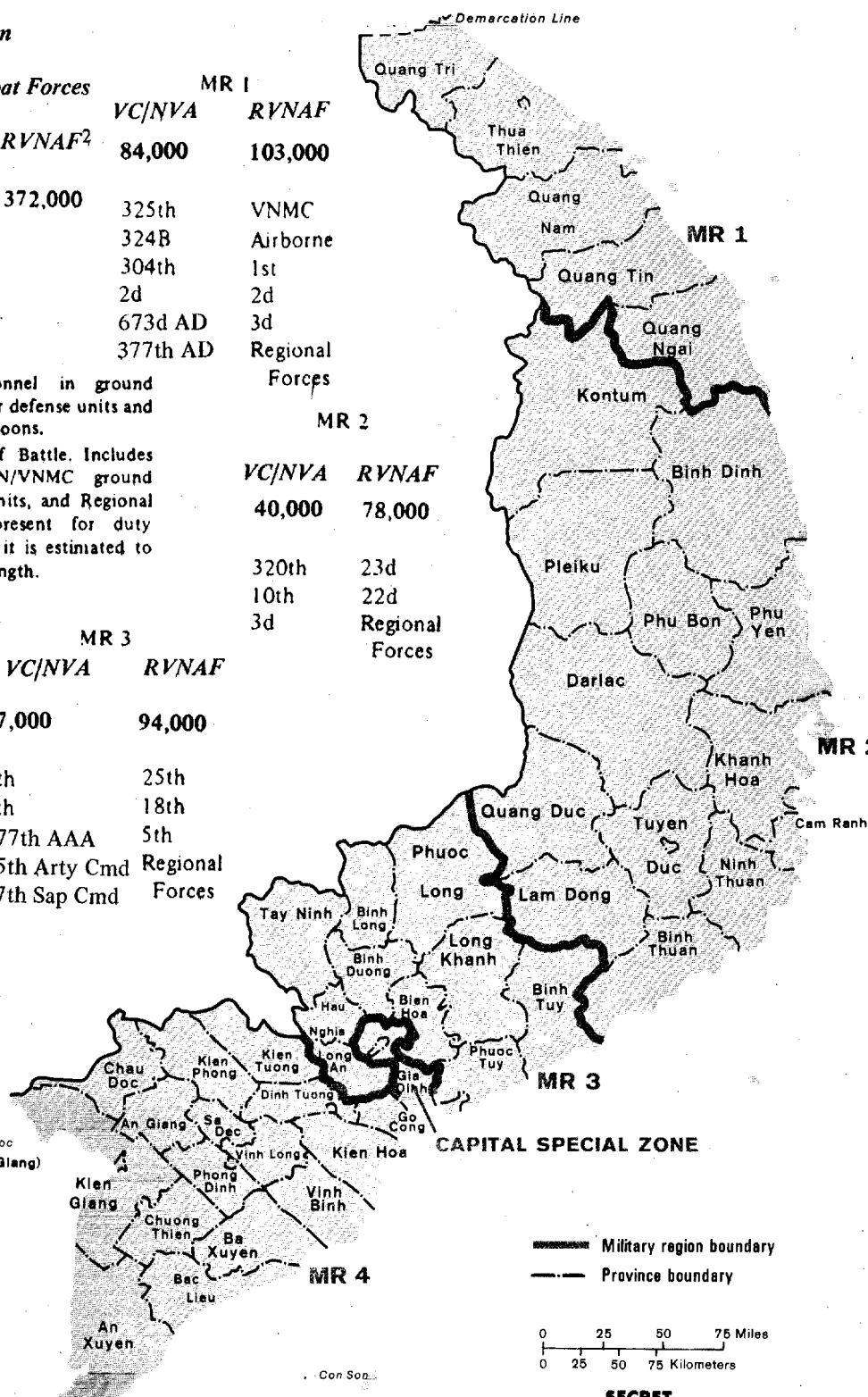
2. RVNAF Ground Order of Battle. Includes assigned personnel in ARVN/VNMC ground combat and combat support units, and Regional Force battalions. Although present for duty strength is no longer available, it is estimated to be about 85% of assigned strength.

MR 3	
VC/NVA	RVNAF
37,000	94,000

9th	25th
7th	18th
377th AAA	5th
75th Arty Cmd	Regional Forces
27th Sap Cmd	

MR 4	
VC/NVA	RVNAF
26,000	97,000

5th	21st
	9th
	7th
	Regional Forces



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concerned over diminished US military aid, and has begun conserving its ammunition and fuel stocks.

1. So far, this has had little impact on Saigon's overall position, but its forces are now less aggressive, and more willing to abandon remote and non-essential outposts.

E. Saigon also has serious economic problems. Since mid-1972, the urban industrial and services sectors have operated at well below capacity, and inflation has eroded real incomes of military personnel, civil servants, and city dwellers in general. The agricultural situation, however, has improved, and rice stocks are sufficient to assure adequate supplies without US PL-480 assistance for the first time in ten years.

1. Unless security conditions markedly deteriorate, economic problems are not likely to put the government under acute pressure over the next year or so.

F. In the political arena, President Thieu's position is still quite solid. Efforts by various opposition groups to exploit popular frustrations have borne little fruit, and have now died down.

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CIA/DIA Order of Battle of Communist  
Military Forces in Indochina  
(in thousands)

	<u>Total</u>		<u>Combat Forces</u>		<u>Administrative Services</u>	
	<u>19 Dec 74</u>	<u>28 Jan 73</u>	<u>19 Dec 74</u>	<u>28 Jan 73</u>	<u>19 Dec 74</u>	<u>28 Jan 73</u>
<u>South Vietnam</u>	<u>295</u>	<u>221</u>	<u>187</u>	<u>149</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>72</u>
NVA	223	159	157	124	66	35
VC	72	62	30	25	42	37
<u>Cambodia</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>29</u>
NVA	9	26	2 <sup>a</sup>	4	7	22
VC	1	16	0	9	1	7
KC	74	45	57	45	17	NA
<u>Laos</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>99</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>49</u>
NVA	40	69	16	30	24	39
PL	33	30	22	20	11	10

<sup>a</sup> Advisory/liaison personnel not organized into combat units.

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III. Recent reporting from reliable sources clearly points to a further stepup in the fighting during the next six months. However, the latest National Intelligence Estimate on Vietnam concluded that the step-up would fall short of a general offensive this year.

A. The NIE also concluded that the Communist military action would be directed toward:

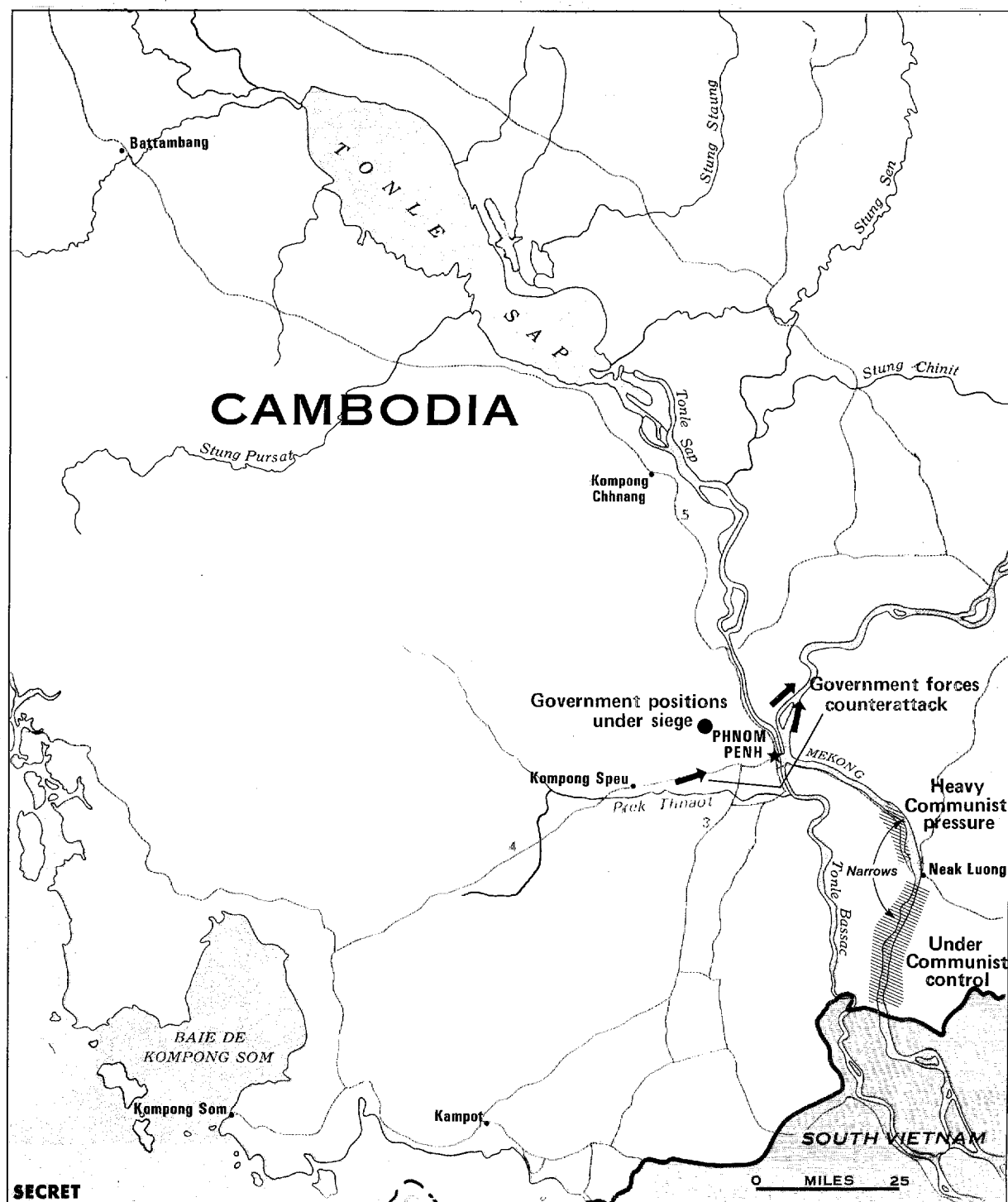
- defeating the government's pacification program,
- inflicting heavy casualties on the South Vietnamese armed forces,
- gaining control of more people and territory, and
- forcing the government into new negotiations at a disadvantage.

B. Under this scenario, without an increase in US military assistance some time this spring, the Communists will be in a significantly stronger position by June than the South Vietnamese for any subsequent fighting.

C. However, if Hanoi perceived particular South Vietnamese vulnerabilities as a result of aid cutbacks, internal political troubles, or a firm rejection by the US, it probably would commit some of its strategic reserve divisions to exploit the situation.

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Cambodia

IV. In Cambodia, the Khmer Communists began their dry season offensive on New Year's Day, and have breached Phnom Penh's outer defenses in several places. Government forces are now counterattacking, but will need several weeks to retake lost territory near the capital and push the Communists out of rocket range of Phnom Penh. No clear outcome is likely in this dry season's fighting.

- A. The most serious insurgent attacks have been along the Mekong River southeast of Phnom Penh. The Communists have captured positions near two key chokepoints downstream from the capital, and they are now in position to shell river convoys from close range.
- B. Most reporting indicates most insurgent attacks this dry season will be against major lines of communication, rather than the capital itself.
  - 1. But a recent report does mention Communist plans for widespread terrorist attacks within Phnom Penh.
- C. Communist China and North Vietnam both give military assistance to the insurgents.
  - 1. Most of the arms and munitions are supplied by Peking, under an agreement worked out

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last spring. The North Vietnamese deliver the supplies to the insurgents.

V. On the political front, there are still no signs of any breakthrough in negotiations.

A. Sihanouk and Khmer Communist leaders have turned thumbs down on the call for peace talks in the UN resolution that preserved the Lon Nol government's seat in the General Assembly. Communist conditions for talks still amount to a demand that Phnom Penh accept defeat and that the US terminate its aid.

1. Sihanouk has stated privately that he would consider a compromise solution, but admits <sup>3845</sup> that his hands are tied by the in-country Communist leaders, who will not.

B. The political scene in Phnom Penh is quiet, and should remain so for awhile.

1. There are, however, severe economic problems, which can only get worse as the effects of US aid cutbacks take hold.

#### Laos

VI. In Laos, the coalition government has survived severe political, economic, and social strains -- as well as the shock of Souvanna Phouma's midsummer heart attack.

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Souvanna probably has not focused on this problem -- and indeed may not yet have admitted to himself that it may be a problem. When or if he does, there are several potential contenders for his mantle:

- King's Council President PRINCE KHAMMAO, a political cipher acceptable to both sides as a possible compromise choice;
- non-Communist Interior Minister PHENG PHONGSAVAN, a political opportunist with strong neutralist credentials and generally acceptable to both sides;
- Lao Communist leader PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG, Souvanna's half-brother and chairman of the coalition's Joint National Political Council;
- Communist Deputy Prime Minister PHOUMI VONGVICHIT, clearly the most capable political leader in the cabinet next to Souvanna.

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A. Despite the opening Souvanna's absence gave the Communists, they made no serious effort to take over the leadership of the coalition. They shared the day to day running of the government with non-Communists.

1. Souvanna returned to Laos from France in early November, and has gradually resumed some of his former responsibilities.

a. Nonetheless, the coalition feels that he may never return to full-time political activity, and both sides are thinking about a successor.

b. Neither is likely to approve a hard-core candidate from the other side, however, and -- if necessary -- Souvanna himself may have to pick someone.

B. The military situation is still stable, and there are no signs that either side intends to resume major hostilities.

1. Some 40,000 North Vietnamese troops and about 23,000 Chinese engineers are still in Laos more than six months after the foreign troop withdrawal deadline.

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